"The Representation of Terrorism in Some Select Novels: A Comparative Study"

A short term Proposal submitted for the registration of PH.D in English Literature.

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Introduction

Since the terrorist attacks of 11th of September 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in America, terrorism has become a serious threat to international and national security. It is now a widespread phenomenon that threatens the lives of civilians anywhere and anytime. Radical terrorists attack anything and anybody. They regard acts of violence as propaganda for their organizations. For them, killing innocent people, robbing banks, hijacking, beheading, assassination, kidnapping and planting bombs are all legitimate acts. For example, they have hijacked airliners, trains and ocean liners. They kidnapped people such as priests and, preachers. They blow up department stores, nightclubs and religious places such as churches and mosques. The attacks of 9/11 were followed by some similar terrorist acts in other countries, including Mumbai in India, Bali in Indonesia, Moscow in Russia, London, Madrid, Boston, and recently Paris in France and many Middle East Countries.

Accordingly, terrorism has emerged as a global dominant phenomenon debated and articulated by politicians, historians, thinkers, philosophers, theorists, religious and academic scholars, journalists and essayists, who all tried to investigate and explore the nature of terrorism, and its causes and evolution. For them, terrorism is rooted in fundamentalism whether political, economic or religious.

As a defining issue of international politics of the first decade of the 21st century, terrorism has emerged as a dominant issue in media coverage and book publications. It appears in the headlines of newspapers, websites, plotlines and TV programs. In the wake of the 9/11, terrorism occupies a major focus of thousand new publications and scholarly researches every year. Researches on terrorism and terrorism-related issues have increased dramatically. 90 percent of the entire literature has been written on terrorism since 9/11. Till 2000, only about 150 books on terrorism were published. In contrast, this figure jumped massively to 1108 titles, in 2001, almost all of these being published in the final three months of the year. 2002 saw a greater number of titles released with a staggering 1767 titles published (34 new books each week). Each of the following years has seen well over 1000 new books added to the literature. Indeed, the five years since 9/11 have probably seen more books published on terrorism than appeared in the previous 50 years. By 2006, one new book on terrorism was being published every six hours. And this is just English-language titles, according to the statistics provided by Amazon, 1st August 2006.

In addition, the number of articles on terrorism in the academic journals has also increased hugely. The journal Studies in Conflict & Terrorism brought out four issues per year prior to 9/11. Now it publishes on a monthly basis. Beyond the core terrorism studies journals, articles on the subject in other journals have also increased hugely across the board.

Furthermore, terrorism has gained a remarkable significant position in literature as the events of the 9/11th have inspired a lot of novelists, poets and dramatists. It has been the writer's responsibility to handle and portray such a topic so as to shape the publics' general perception of the unthinkable nature of terrorism in general, and the attacks of 9/11 in particular as Martin Amis points out: "After a couple of hours at their desks, on September 12, 2001, all the writers on earth were reluctantly considering a change of occupation" (Amis). In this sense, a great number of novels has emerged as a response to that day's events and their consequences. The literary Congress Cataloging-in- publication devised a new classification of works after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, as Post September 11 Fiction, and novels on the phenomenon are referred to by the category of 'political'.

Statement of Problem

The current study aims to investigate, explore and analyze how terrorism is portrayed and articulated in some select post 9/11th novels. Each text contains a portrayal of terrorism as well as its motivation, political, religious or any other ideologies that form a significance issue related to the notion.

The Objectives of Study

This study aims to investigate, explore and analyze the vision of terrorism as portrayed and articulated in some select post 9/11 novels. It attempts:

- To study terrorism from the Western perspective
- To study terrorism from the Islamic perspective
- To study the role of Western Media in targeting Islam as a religion of terrorism and Muslim as terrorists.

- Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study is an attempt to explore the representation of terrorism in select novels published in post 9/ 11. It focuses only on the following four novels:

- *Terrorist (*2006) by John Updike
- *The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside and Why I Left (2007)* by Ed Hosain
- *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid
- *Saffron Dreams* (2009) by Shaila Abdullah

These novels have been selected because they represent diverse aspects of how terrorism is perceived in the post 9/11 fiction. The authors are regarded as the new voices in opinion formation, providing different understanding of terrorism and its ideologies, allowing the chance for proper comparison. The texts under the study serve the purpose of comparison which should be based on differences rather than on similarities according to American school of comparative literature. As she study envisages to accommodate a myriad of complex images of terrorism and it ideologies. it is not possible to study all the novels published after 9/11th because they do not serve the purpose of the study and criteria of selection.

Significance of Study

This study is an investigation and exploration of terrorism as reflected in post 9/11fiction. The main contribution of this study to the existing literature is apparent. First of all, the significance of this study lies in its concerns with the most important issue in the globe. Due to its significance in politics, military, economic, literature and other aspects of the contemporary life, terrorism has become of current interest for so many scholars anywhere and anytime. According to the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first attempt to deal with the presentation of terrorism in post 9/11 fiction.

Methodology

The present study is purely analytical and is comparative in nature; the tools of comparison and contrast are used. An interdisciplinary approach to the study of the portrayal of terrorism is essential because no sole discipline is able to provide a comprehensive understanding from various dimensions and perspectives. Here, this approach is used because the study deals with a broad and complex topic that is interdisciplinary in nature. Therefore, the researcher has to bring insights and integrate information, data, perspectives, concepts, etc. from different disciplines of knowledge to reach to an essential understanding of the portrait of terrorism whose investigation and exploration are beyond a scope of a single discipline or field.

Moreover, some of the literary texts under study are left full of blanks and gaps that should be filled so as to get a complete exploration and analysis on the issue related to how the narrators portray terrorism. To fill such gaps, the researcher has to turn to other disciplines. In *Saffron Dreams*, for instance, to refute and critique the western stereotypes regarding Islam, Jihad, and Terrorism, Abdullah just refers to these concepts without further giving enough explanation for them. And to get an inclusive understanding, the researcher has to draw upon an interdisciplinary field. This is to say that he should turn to religion of Islam and its sources to get the true meanings of these concepts.

Scheme of Chapters

This study for the purpose of convenience has been divided into seven chapters.

Chapter one: Introduction. It is concerned with the introduction, statement of the problem, the objectives of study, and the significance of the study. The chapter also presents the scope of the study, methodology followed, and finally, the scheme of chapters is outlined.

Chapter two: Literature Review.

Chapter Three*: The Islamist*: *Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside and Why I Left*: Critique of Islamism/ A Terrorist as a Radical Islamist.

Chapter Four*: Terrorist:* The Terrorist as essentially Muslim in West.

Chapter five: *Saffron Dreams*: A Terrorist as the Agent of Evil.

Chapter six: The Reluctant Fundamentalist: A Terrorist as an Anti-Imperialism.

Chapter seven: Conclusion

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